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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 VILNIUS 001103

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL KOLBE DISCUSSES GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR AND DEMOCRATIZATION WITH PRESIDENT ADAMKUS AND GOL

REF: A. A. VILNIUS 977

[B. B. VILNIUS 993](#)

[C. C. VILNIUS 1012](#)

[D. D. VILNIUS 1017](#)

[E. E. VILNIUS 1070](#)

[F. F. VILNIUS 1093](#)

Classified By: VICE CONSUL TREVOR BOYD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[¶1. \(SBU\) Summary.](#) Representative Jim Kolbe led a six-Member congressional delegation to Vilnius October 10-12. The delegation discussed democracy-building initiatives in the region, reviewed U.S. bilateral and multilateral foreign assistance programs, and Lithuania's relationship with Russia with President Valdas Adamkus, Speaker Arturas Paulauskas, Minister of Defense Gediminas Kirkilas, Special Investigative Service Director Povilas Malakauskas and Belarusian opposition figures. The delegation thanked interlocutors for Lithuania's strong contributions to the Global War on Terror, including its leadership in establishing a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. End Summary.

[¶2. \(SBU\) Representative Jim Kolbe \(R-AZ\), Chairman of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, led a six-Member delegation to Lithuania on October 10-12. The delegation, which also included Representatives Martin Sabo \(D-MN\), John Carter \(R-TX\), James Moran \(D-VA\), Dennis Rehberg \(R-MN\), and John Shimkus \(R-IL\), affirmed to GOL interlocutors a consistent message of gratitude for Lithuania's contributions to U.S.- and NATO-led operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans. The delegation also sought ideas on how the USG and Lithuania might best work together to build democracy in the region, particularly in Belarus, and how U.S. foreign assistance programs could facilitate these initiatives.](#)

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Supporting Democracy in Lithuania's Neighborhood  
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[¶3. \(C\) President Valdas Adamkus told the delegation of Lithuania's plans to organize a "Conference of New Democracies" in May 2006. Adamkus anticipates that the conference will include representatives from Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova and hopes that high-level representatives from the USG and other Western democracies will participate. Adamkus also emphasized Lithuania's support for democratic reforms in Belarus and noted that George Soros promised sizable funding for the European Humanities University, a Belarusian institute operating in exile in Lithuania.](#)

[¶4. \(C\) Parliamentary Speaker Arturas Paulauskas thanked the delegation for USG support of Lithuania's foreign policy aspirations, including promoting democracy in Belarus. Concurring with Rep. Kolbe's assertion that Lithuania has already undertaken "very substantial" initiatives related both to the global war on terror and democratization, Paulauskas stated that Lithuania has a "very large" role to play in promoting democracy in the region. Emmanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of parliament's American Caucus, called upon the United States to make more than a "mere symbolic" gesture of funding for pro-democratic forces in Belarus and to better synchronize and fund initiatives with "Friends of Belarus" forces within the EU. The issue of Belarus, Zingeris said, should be elevated into the top tier of the issues for the region.](#)

[¶5. \(C\) A similar message was proffered by members of Belarus' opposition during a meeting arranged with the assistance of local representatives of the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute \(reftel F\). The Belarusian delegation, which comprised leaders of the 10 democratic coalition, independent media, and human rights NGOs, strongly encouraged increased U.S. financial assistance to Belarusian democratic forces, particularly in the area of print media. CODEL Kolbe expressed continued U.S. support for the Belarusian opposition movement and discussed prospects for democratic reform in the country. The Belarusian opposition leaders were cautiously optimistic about the prospects for democratic change in the near future, with the 2006 presidential elections serving as the catalyzing event.](#)

16. (SBU) Special Investigation Services (STT) Director Povilas Malakauskas told the delegation that USG assistance to his organization to combat corruption and organized crime in Lithuania had also influenced the region for the better. Lithuania, he said, is passing the expertise gained from the USG through technical assistance and educational exchanges to Ukraine, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Malakauskas highlighted the need for additional training and assistance, and called for a longer term exchange of experts between DHS and the STT.

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Relations with Russia  
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17. (C) The President told the CODEL that Lithuania's support for democracy irritates Russia, and noted that President Putin snubbed him blatantly while they were in New York. Adamkus also made known that he harbors doubts that the incursion and crash of the Russian fighter plane on September 15 (septel) were entirely accidental, but that he is satisfied with how Lithuania resolved the situation (reftels A-E).

18. (SBU) Minister of Defense Gediminas Kirkilas told the delegation that the SU-27 incident appeared to be an accident without malicious intent, and noted that he hoped the incident would focus more attention on the status of the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and on NATO's need to upgrade the capabilities of the Baltic Air Policing mission. Kirkilas called for the demilitarization of the Kaliningrad region and noted that Lithuania would look to NATO for support on this issue.

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Lithuania Wants to Remain an Active NATO Ally  
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19. (SBU) Defense Minister Kirkilas thanked CODEL Kolbe for the USG's vital and sustained support to Lithuania's military. Kirkilas asked for continued U.S. cooperation, declaring, "We want to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with you." Kirkilas highlighted U.S. assistance to the Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan as particularly helpful and described Afghanistan as a "long-term commitment" for the GOL. The Minister also noted that a recently adopted parliamentary resolution will provide the MOD with much greater flexibility to deploy Lithuanian troops on international operations.

10. (SBU) Kirkilas outlined three primary goals for Lithuania's defense policy. The first is to remain an active NATO member through a modernization of its armed forces that will allow for sizeable participation in international operations. The second is to promote regional stability by deepening a strategic partnership with Poland and the other Baltic countries while maintaining good relations with neighbors Russia and Belarus. The final goal is to increase cooperation and promote reform in countries of the former Soviet Union, notably Ukraine, Moldova, and the South Caucasus.

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Energy Dependence  
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11. (C) President Adamkus said that he expected Lukoil to win the bid for Yukos-held shares of the Mazeikiu Nafta oil refinery (MN), but expressed concern for Lithuania's energy security. He added that he was keeping a low public profile on this transaction because of his active support of the 1998 privatization of MN to the U.S. company Williams International -- a sale that, in the end, had been a bad deal for Lithuania, in his view.

12. (C) Adamkus noted his support for nuclear energy and said he hopes to win EU approval for a new nuclear power plant (NPP) to replace the Ignalina NPP, which Lithuania committed during EU accession negotiations to decommission by the end of 2009. The Ambassador reminded Adamkus that Westinghouse remains keenly interested in building a new nuclear-powered electricity-generating plant in Lithuania.

13. (C) Speaker Paulauskas highlighted the relationship between energy and Lithuania's independence. Noting that Lithuania was heavily dependent upon Russian oil and natural gas to fuel its economy, and that the role of the U.S. is "always important," Paulauskas called upon the U.S. to assist Lithuania seek energy independence from Russia.

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Comment  
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14. (SBU) Lithuania's political leadership opened every door

for CODEL Kolbe, beginning with the welcome lunch hosted by President Adamkus. The level of the CODEL's meetings and the caliber of their conversations with top GOL policy-makers reflect Lithuania's continued confidence in the United States as a critical ally with shared values and complimentary foreign policy goals.

¶15. (U) CODEL Kolbe did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.

KELLY